

VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMN #0193/01 0971647
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 071647Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8932
INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 000193

SIPDIS

FOR WHA/BSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [UY](#)
SUBJECT: URUGUAY: FM GONZALO FERNANDEZ ON RECENT TRAVELS,
SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

REF: A. SANTIAGO 0309
[1](#)B. MVD 0178 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alfred Schandlbauer for
reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

Summary
- - - -

[1](#)1. (C) FM Fernandez told the Charge April 2 that President Tabare Vazquez had an excellent meeting with VP Biden March 27 in Chile; that Uruguay is strengthening commercial ties with China; that he hopes to use an April 6 meeting with the Secretary to invite her to Uruguay; that Uruguay is not interested in ALBA; and that Vazquez has modest aspirations for the upcoming Summit of the Americas. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Charge Matthewman called on FM Gonzalo Fernandez April 2 to exchange views before the foreign minister's April 6-7 trip to the U.S. Also present were Uruguay's Ambassador to the U.S., Carlos Gianelli, and MFA Director of Political Affairs Ambassador Elbio Rosselli. The discussion ranged over issues including President Vazquez's meeting with VP Biden in Chile March 27; the FM's plans for his upcoming (4/6) bilat with the Secretary; Uruguay's aspirations for the Summit of the Americas; the pre-Summit ALBA meeting; and Vazquez's recent trip to China.

Chile and China
- - - - -

[1](#)3. (C) Fernandez confirmed that Vazquez and Biden enjoyed a very good dialogue on the margins of the Progressive Governance Leaders Summit in Chile March 27 (Ref A). Biden convinced Vazquez that the conventional wisdom that holds that the Obama Administration is not placing sufficient emphasis on Latin America is completely wrong, Fernandez said. Similarly, Biden assuaged a common regional concern by explaining to Vazquez that the U.S. is not taking steps toward protectionism.

[1](#)4. (C) Fernandez characterized a late-March visit by Vazquez to China (Ref B) as a commercial success. The most important result was a Chinese commitment to maintain current levels of purchases of Uruguayan commodities, an undertaking Fernandez characterized as a "big step" under current conditions. The Chinese also held out the prospect of a low-cost revitalization of Uruguay's decrepit railroad system via a possible trains-for-food swap.

Clinton/Fernandez Bilat
- - - - -

[1](#)5. (C) Secretary Clinton visited Uruguay in 1998, and Fernandez noted that he plans to evoke memories of that visit during their April 6 bilat as a way to lead in to another

invitation. He will suggest September as the most propitious month for such a visit. Fernandez also said that he will use the meeting to stress Uruguay's excellent relationship with the U.S. and its desire to deepen/strengthen that relationship under the Obama Administration. Fernandez's other main goal is to transmit clearly the message that Uruguay is ~ ideologically aligned with other countries that have difficult relations with the U.S.,⁸ and that Uruguay is well placed and well disposed to help with "difficult" issues like Paraguay (in that context, Fernandez noted that Vazquez is traveling to Asuncion in May).

Summit of the Americas - - - - -

6 (C) Regarding the Summit, Fernandez said Vazquez doesn't have much enthusiasm and isn't going with any great expectations. He's only attending for the opportunity to establish a relationship with President Obama. Vazquez understands that he won't get a private meeting with Obama, but is counting on alphabetical seating to place him next to the president. Vazquez plans to use that proximity for friendly interaction. Uruguay will hew to Brazil's line throughout on any policy matters under discussion, Fernandez said. Ambassador Gianelli revealed that President Vazquez had agreed to meet with Rep. Engel in T&T, and asked for help arranging that meeting.

17. (C) When the pre-Summit ALBA meeting was raised, Fernandez didn't comment directly about possible GOU participation, but instead related an anecdote about how he had refused an invitation to a previous ALBA meeting to celebrate Honduras' accession into that body. Fernandez said he didn't go

because &it didn't make sense for us to attend a ceremony for an organization we don't belong to and never will.⁸
Schandlbauer